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A/RES/53/122
10 February 1999

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 105

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/53/620)*]

53/122. Assistance to unaccompanied refugee minors

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 49/172 of 23 December 1994, 50/150 of 21 December 1995, 51/73 of 12 December 1996 and 52/105 of 12 December 1997,

Aware of the fact that the majority of refugees are children and women,

Bearing in mind that unaccompanied refugee minors are among the most vulnerable refugees and the most at risk of neglect, violence, forced military recruitment, sexual assault and other abuses and therefore require special assistance and care,

Mindful of the fact that the ultimate solution to the plight of unaccompanied minors is their return to and reunification with their families,

Noting the revised Guidelines on Refugee Children issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in May 1994 and the development of an emergency kit to facilitate coordination and to enhance the quality of responses to the needs of unaccompanied minors by the Office of the High Commissioner, the United Nations Children's Fund and non-governmental organizations,

Noting with appreciation the efforts of the Office of the High Commissioner and the United Nations Children's Fund in the identification and tracing of unaccompanied refugee minors, and welcoming their efforts in reunifying family members of refugees,

Welcoming the efforts exerted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the reunification of family members of refugees,

Noting the efforts of the High Commissioner to ensure the protection of and assistance to refugees, including children and unaccompanied minors, and noting that further efforts need to be exerted to this effect,

Recalling the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child[1] and the 1951 Convention[2] and the 1967 Protocol[3] relating to the Status of Refugees,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[4]

2. *Also takes note* of the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict;[5]

3. *Expresses its deep concern* at the continued plight of unaccompanied refugee minors, and emphasizes once again the urgent need for their early identification and for timely, detailed and accurate information on their number and whereabouts;

4. *Expresses the hope once again* that adequate resources will be provided for programmes of identification and tracing of unaccompanied refugee minors;

5. *Calls upon* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in cooperation with other relevant United Nations bodies, to incorporate into its programmes policies that aim at preventing refugee family separation, conscious of the importance of family unity;

6. *Calls upon* all Governments, the Secretary-General, the Office of the High Commissioner, all United Nations organizations, other international organizations and non-governmental organizations concerned to exert the maximum effort to assist and protect refugee minors and to expedite the return to and reunification with their families of unaccompanied refugee minors;

7. *Urges* the Office of the High Commissioner, all United Nations organizations, other international organizations and non-governmental organizations concerned to take appropriate steps to mobilize resources commensurate with the needs and interests of unaccompanied refugee minors and for their reunification with their families;

8. *Calls upon* all States and other parties to armed conflict to respect international humanitarian law, and, in this regard, calls upon States parties to respect fully the provisions of the Geneva

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[1] Resolution 44/25, annex.

[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[3] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

[4] A/53/325.

[5] A/53/482, annex.

Conventions of 12 August 1949[6] and related instruments, while bearing in mind resolution 2 adopted at the twenty-sixth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held at Geneva in December 1995, and to respect the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[1] which accord children affected by armed conflict special protection and treatment;

9. *Condemns* all acts of exploitation of unaccompanied refugee minors, including their use as soldiers or human shields in armed conflict and their forced recruitment into military forces, and any other acts that endanger their safety and personal security;

10. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Children's Fund, other United Nations organizations and other international organizations to mobilize adequate assistance to unaccompanied refugee minors in the areas of relief, education, health and psychological rehabilitation;

11. *Encourages* the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict in his efforts to raise awareness worldwide and to mobilize official and public opinion for the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including refugee minors;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the implementation of the present resolution and to give special attention to the girl-child refugee in his report.

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[6] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970-973.

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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/53/620)*]

53/123. Follow-up to the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 48/113 of 20 December 1993, 49/173 of 23 December 1994, 50/151 of 21 December 1995, 51/70 of 12 December 1996 and, in particular, 52/102 of 12 December 1997,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General[1] and that of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,[2]

Recognizing the ongoing acuteness of the migration and displacement problems in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the necessity to follow up the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring

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[1] A/53/413.

[2] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 12* (A/53/12).

States and the subsequent conclusions of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,[3]

Reaffirming the view of the Conference that the primary responsibility for tackling population displacement problems lies with the affected countries themselves and that these issues are to be regarded as national priorities, while at the same time recognizing the need for enhancing international support for the national efforts of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States aiming at the effective implementation of such responsibilities within the framework of the Programme of Action of the Conference,[4]

Noting with satisfaction the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in developing strategies and practical tools for more effective capacity-building in countries of origin and enhancing programmes to address the needs of various categories of concern to the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States,

Welcoming the contributions of those countries that responded to the 1998 appeal launched by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration, and appreciating this tangible encouragement to the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and to further inter-agency cooperation,

Taking note of the positive results emanating from the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Conference,

Convinced of the necessity of further strengthening practical measures for the achievement of effective implementation of the Programme of Action,

Recalling that the protection and promotion of human rights and the strengthening of democratic institutions are essential to prevent mass population displacement,

Mindful that effective implementation of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action should be facilitated and can be ensured only through cooperation and coordinated activities undertaken in this respect by all interested States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other actors,

Noting and reaffirming the importance of the 1951 Convention[5] and the 1967 Protocol[6] relating to the Status of Refugees,

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[3] Ibid., *Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 12A* and corrigendum (A/51/12/Add.1 and Corr.1), sect. III.B; ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 12A* (A/52/12/Add.1), sect. III.B; and ibid., *Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 12A* (A/53/12/Add.1), sect. III.B.

[4] A/51/341 and Corr.1, appendix.

[5] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[6] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

1. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General[1] and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;[2]

2. *Calls upon* Governments of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to strengthen their efforts and mutual cooperation relating to the follow-up to the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States, and welcomes the positive results achieved by them in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Conference;[4]

3. *Invites* all countries that have not yet done so to accede to and implement fully the 1951 Convention[5] and the 1967 Protocol[6] relating to the Status of Refugees, while welcoming the accession of Turkmenistan to the Convention;

4. *Calls upon* States and interested international organizations, in a spirit of solidarity and burden-sharing, to provide appropriate forms and levels of support for the practical implementation of the Programme of Action;

5. *Invites* international financial and other institutions to contribute to the financing of projects and programmes within the framework of the implementation of the Programme of Action;

6. *Invites* the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States to intensify bilateral and subregional cooperation in maintaining the balance of commitments and interests in the process leading up to the implementation of the Programme of Action;

7. *Calls upon* the Governments of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States to continue to strengthen their commitment to the principles underpinning the Programme of Action, in particular human rights and refugee protection principles, and to lend high-level political support to ensure progress in its implementation;

8. *Invites* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration to enhance their mutual relationship with other key international actors, such as the Council of Europe, the European Commission and human rights, development and financial institutions, in order better to address the wide-ranging and complex issues in the Programme of Action;

9. *Welcomes* the progress made in building civil society, in particular through the development of the non-governmental sector and the development of cooperation between non-governmental organizations and the Governments of a number of countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and notes in this regard the relationship between the progress made in implementing the Programme of Action and the success in promoting civil society, especially in the field of human rights;

10. *Encourages* the involvement of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the follow-up to the Conference, and invites them to demonstrate stronger support for the process of the multinational constructive dialogue among a wide range of countries concerned and further action with a view to the full implementation of the recommendations of the Conference;

11. *Emphasizes* the necessity of fulfilling the recommendations of the Programme of Action relating to ensuring respect for human rights as an important factor in the management of migration flows, the consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and stability;

12. *Recognizes* the importance of undertaking measures, on the basis of strict adherence to all of the principles of international law, including humanitarian law and international human rights standards, to prevent situations that lead to new flows of refugees, displaced persons and other forms of involuntary displacement;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the progress achieved in the implementation of the Programme of Action;

14. *Decides* to continue examination of the question at its fifty-fourth session.

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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/53/620)*]

53/124. New international humanitarian order

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 51/74 of 12 December 1996 and other pertinent resolutions[1] relating to the promotion of a new international humanitarian order and of international cooperation in the humanitarian field,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General[2] and the previous reports[3] containing the comments and views of Governments as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations,

Keeping in mind the importance, in this context, of the role of the United Nations system, including, in particular, the newly established Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat,

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[1] Resolutions 36/136 of 14 December 1981, 37/201 of 18 December 1982, 38/125 of 16 December 1983, 40/126 of 13 December 1985, 42/120 and 42/121 of 7 December 1987, 43/129 and 43/130 of 8 December 1988, 45/101 and 45/102 of 14 December 1990, 47/106 of 16 December 1992 and 49/170 of 23 December 1994.

[2] A/53/486.

[3] A/37/145, A/38/450, A/40/358 and Add.1 and 2, A/41/472, A/43/734 and Add.1, A/45/524, A/47/352, A/49/577 and Corr.1 and A/51/454.

Noting with concern the growing number of complex emergencies and humanitarian problems,

Noting the importance of adherence to internationally accepted norms and principles and the need to promote, as required, national and international legislation to meet actual and potential humanitarian challenges,

Bearing in mind that an adequate response to emergency situations can be best ensured through local capacity-building and institution-building,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Secretary-General for his continuing support for the efforts to promote a new international humanitarian order;

2. *Invites* Governments to make available to the Secretary-General, on a voluntary basis, information and expertise on humanitarian problems of special concern to them, in order to identify opportunities for future action;

3. *Calls upon* Governments and other actors to ensure strict adherence to accepted humanitarian norms and principles and to promote national and international legislation that is responsive to actual and potential humanitarian problems;

4. *Invites* the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues to reinforce its activities as described in the report of the Secretary-General[2] and other pertinent documents;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to remain in contact with Governments and the non-governmental organizations concerned, including the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/53/620)*]

53/125. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the activities of her Office[1] and the report and conclusions of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the work of its forty-ninth session,[2]

Recalling its resolution 52/103 of 12 December 1997,

Commending the High Commissioner and her staff for the competent, courageous and dedicated manner in which they discharge their responsibilities, paying tribute to those staff members whose lives have been endangered in the course of their duties, and deploring the injuries and deaths of staff members as a consequence of generalized as well as targeted violence,

1. *Endorses* the report and conclusions of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the work of its forty-ninth session;[2]

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[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 12* (A/53/12).

[2] Ibid., *Supplement No. 12A* (A/53/12/Add.1).

2. *Strongly reaffirms* the fundamental importance and the purely humanitarian and non-political character of the function of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of providing international protection to refugees and seeking permanent solutions to the problem of refugees;

3. *Reaffirms* the fundamental importance of the 1951 Convention[3] and the 1967 Protocol[4] relating to the Status of Refugees, in particular their implementation in a manner fully compatible with the object and purpose of those instruments, notes with satisfaction that one hundred and thirty-six States are now parties to one or both instruments, and welcomes in this regard the decision by the High Commissioner actively to promote accessions to the Convention and the Protocol;

4. *Notes* that the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[5] is being commemorated in 1998, and calls upon all States to reaffirm their commitment to the Declaration as a fundamental step towards protection for everyone;

5. *Reaffirms* that, as set out in article 14 of the Declaration, everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution, and calls upon all States to refrain from taking measures that jeopardize the institution of asylum, in particular by returning or expelling refugees or asylum-seekers contrary to international standards;

6. *Emphasizes* that refugee protection is primarily the responsibility of States, whose full and effective cooperation, action and political resolve are required to enable the Office of the High Commissioner to fulfil its mandated functions;

7. *Stresses* the importance of international solidarity and burden-sharing in reinforcing the international protection of refugees, and urges all States and relevant non-governmental and other organizations, in conjunction with the Office of the High Commissioner, to cooperate and mobilize resources until durable solutions are found, with a view to reducing the burden borne by States, particularly developing countries, that have received large numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees;

8. *Condemns* all acts that pose a threat to the personal security and well-being of refugees and asylum-seekers, such as refoulement, unlawful expulsion and physical attacks, and calls upon all States of refuge, in cooperation with international organizations where appropriate, to take all necessary measures to ensure respect for the principles of refugee protection, including the humane treatment of asylum-seekers;

9. *Urges* States to uphold the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, *inter alia*, through effective measures to prevent the infiltration of armed elements, to identify and separate any such armed elements from refugee populations, to settle refugees in secure locations and to afford to the Office of the High Commissioner and other appropriate humanitarian organizations prompt, unhindered and safe access to asylum-seekers, refugees and other persons of concern;

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[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[4] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

[5] Resolution 217 A (III).

10. *Calls upon* States and all concerned parties to continue to cooperate closely with the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner and other humanitarian personnel in performing the functions required under their mandates, to take all possible measures to safeguard their physical security and property, to investigate fully any crime committed against them, to bring to justice persons responsible for such crimes and to facilitate the discharge of the mandated functions of the Office of the High Commissioner as well as of other humanitarian organizations;

11. *Urges* all States and relevant organizations to support the High Commissioner's search for durable solutions to refugee problems, including voluntary repatriation, integration in the country of asylum and resettlement in a third country, as appropriate, reaffirms that voluntary repatriation is the preferred solution to refugee problems, and calls upon countries of origin, countries of asylum, the Office of the High Commissioner and the international community as a whole to do everything possible to enable refugees to exercise their right to return home in safety and with dignity;

12. *Calls upon* all States to promote conditions conducive to the voluntary repatriation of refugees in safety and with dignity, including conditions furthering reconciliation and long-term development in countries of return, and to support the sustainable reintegration of returnees by providing countries of origin with necessary rehabilitation and development assistance in conjunction, as appropriate, with the Office of the High Commissioner and relevant development agencies, and also urges the Office of the High Commissioner to strengthen its cooperation and coordination with relevant entities, including international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations;

13. *Reiterates* the right of all persons to return to their country of origin, emphasizes in this regard the obligation of all States to accept the return of their nationals, calls upon all States to facilitate the return of their nationals who have sought asylum and have been determined not to be in need of international protection, and affirms the need for the return of persons to be undertaken in a humane manner and with full respect for their human rights and dignity, irrespective of the status of the persons concerned;

14. *Acknowledges* the desirability of comprehensive approaches by the international community, including comprehensive regional approaches, to the problems of refugees and displaced persons, and notes in this regard that capacity-building in countries of origin and countries of asylum can play an important role in addressing the root causes of refugee flows, in strengthening emergency preparedness and response and in providing effective protection and achieving durable solutions;

15. *Urges* States, in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner and other relevant organizations, to explore and support fully capacity-building initiatives as part of a comprehensive approach to addressing refugee issues, and to take necessary measures to promote sustainable development and to ensure the success of capacity-building activities, including those which strengthen legal and judicial institutions, strengthen civil society and promote the observance of human rights, the rule of law and accountability, which enhance the capacity of States to fulfil their responsibilities in respect of persons of concern to the Office of the High Commissioner;

16. *Notes* the relevance of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,[6] reaffirms its support for the role of the Office of the High Commissioner in providing humanitarian assistance and protection to internally displaced persons, on the basis of specific requests from the Secretary-General or the

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[6] E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, annex.

competent organs of the United Nations and with the consent of the State concerned, taking into account the complementarities of the mandates and expertise of other relevant organizations, and emphasizes that activities on behalf of internally displaced persons must not undermine the institution of asylum;

17. *Calls upon* States to adopt an approach that is sensitive to gender-related concerns and to ensure that women whose claims to refugee status are based upon a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons enumerated in the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, including persecution through sexual violence or other gender-related persecution, are recognized as refugees, and encourages the Office of the High Commissioner to continue and to strengthen its efforts for the protection of refugee women;

18. *Urges* States and relevant parties to respect and observe principles of international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law that are of particular relevance to safeguarding the rights of child and adolescent refugees, notes the particular vulnerability of refugee children to being forcibly exposed to the risks of injury, exploitation and death, particularly in the context of armed conflict, and to abduction with a view to forcing participation in military activities, and urges all States and concerned parties to take all possible measures to protect child and adolescent refugees, including, in particular, from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse, and to prevent their separation from their families;

19. *Notes* that 1999 has been declared the International Year of Older Persons, and calls upon the Office of the High Commissioner to make renewed efforts to ensure that the rights, needs and dignity of elderly refugees are fully respected and addressed through appropriate programme activities;

20. *Recalls* paragraphs 14 to 16 of its resolution 50/152 of 21 December 1995, and encourages the High Commissioner to continue her activities on behalf of stateless persons;

21. *Calls upon* all Governments and other donors to demonstrate their international solidarity and burden-sharing with countries of asylum through efforts aimed at continuing to alleviate the burden borne by States, in particular developing countries, countries with economies in transition and countries with limited resources that, owing to their location, host large numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers, to contribute to the programmes of the Office of the High Commissioner and, taking into account the effects on countries of asylum of the increasing requirements of large refugee populations and the need to widen the donor base and to achieve greater burden-sharing among donors, to assist the High Commissioner in securing additional and timely income from traditional governmental sources, other Governments and the private sector in order to ensure that the needs of refugees, returnees and displaced persons of concern to the Office of the High Commissioner are fully met.

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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/53/620)*]

53/126. Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 52/101 of 12 December 1997,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General[1] and that of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,[2]

Recognizing the need to improve the security of refugees and to maintain the civilian and humanitarian nature of refugee camps and settlements in accordance with international laws, in particular refugee instruments, as well as human rights instruments and humanitarian laws,

Noting with appreciation the continued efforts being expended by countries of asylum in accommodating refugees,

Convinced of the necessity of strengthening the capacity within the United Nations system for the implementation of relief and assistance programmes for refugees, returnees and displaced persons,

Welcoming the ongoing process of voluntary repatriation of refugees in some parts of Africa,

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[1] A/53/328.

[2] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 12* (A/53/12).

Welcoming also decision CM/Dec.412 (LXVIII) on the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa, adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its sixty-eighth ordinary session, held at Ouagadougou from 4 to 7 June 1998,[3]

Welcoming further the outcome of the ministerial meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Africa, held on 24 September 1998,[4] and the attention that was given at that meeting to the issue of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa,

Taking note of the memoranda of understanding signed between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Southern African Development Community in July 1996 on refugees, returnees, displaced persons and undocumented migration in southern Africa and between the Office of the High Commissioner and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in June 1997 on issues concerning refugees and returnees,

Recalling the provisions of its resolution 2312 (XXII) of 14 December 1967, by which it adopted the Declaration on Territorial Asylum,

Recalling also the Organization of African Unity Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa of 1969[5] and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,[6]

Recognizing the need for States to create conditions conducive both to the prevention of flows of refugees and displaced persons, primarily by addressing the root causes, and to solutions, including voluntary repatriation,

Recognizing also the positive outcome of the conflict resolution efforts carried out in the subregion by the Economic Community of West African States, in creating a conducive environment for the voluntary repatriation of refugees and displaced persons,

Emphasizing the urgent need for Governments, especially those of the countries of origin, to address the root causes of the conflicts that precipitate outflows and displacements of refugees,

Bearing in mind that the majority of refugees and displaced persons are women and children,

Noting with great concern that, despite all the efforts deployed so far by the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and others, the situation of refugees and displaced persons in Africa, especially in the West African and Great Lakes regions and in the Horn of Africa, remains precarious,

1. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General[1] and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;[2]

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[3] See A/53/179, annex I.

[4] See S/PV.3931. For the final text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-third Year, Plenary Meetings*, 3931st meeting.

[5] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1001, No. 14691.

[6] Ibid., vol. 1520, No. 26363.

2. *Notes with concern* that the declining socio-economic situation, compounded by political instability, internal strife, human rights violations and natural disasters, has led to increased numbers of refugees and displaced persons in some countries of Africa;

3. *Calls upon* all States and international organizations, within their mandates, to ensure that the civilian and humanitarian nature of refugee camps is not compromised by the presence or the activities of armed elements;

4. *Expresses deep concern* at the serious and far-reaching consequences of large numbers of refugees and displaced persons in the receiving countries and the implications for security, long-term socio-economic development and the environment;

5. *Expresses concern* at instances where the fundamental principle of asylum is jeopardized by unlawful expulsion or refoulement or by threats to the life, physical security, integrity, dignity and well-being of refugees;

6. *Expresses its appreciation and strong support* for those African Governments and local populations that, in spite of the general deterioration of socio-economic and environmental conditions and overstretched national resources, continue to accept the additional burden imposed upon them by increasing numbers of refugees and displaced persons, in compliance with the relevant principles of asylum;

7. *Commends* the Governments concerned for their sacrifices in providing assistance and protection to refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons and for their efforts to promote voluntary repatriation in safety and with dignity and other durable solutions;

8. *Expresses its gratitude* to the international community, and to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in particular, for the humanitarian assistance it has continued to render to refugees and displaced persons and to the countries of asylum;

9. *Welcomes* the strengthening of cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner and the Organization of African Unity at all levels, and urges the two organizations, in conjunction with United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the international community and the Governments concerned, to increase efforts aimed at facilitating voluntary repatriation in safety and with dignity and at addressing the root causes of the refugee problem and working out modalities for a lasting solution;

10. *Reiterates* that the Plan of Action adopted by the Regional Conference on Assistance to Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in the Great Lakes Region, held at Bujumbura from 15 to 17 February 1995, as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/149, continues to be a viable framework for the resolution of the refugee and humanitarian problems in that region;

11. *Calls upon* the Office of the High Commissioner and other concerned entities to intensify protection activities by, *inter alia*, supporting the efforts of African Governments through appropriate capacity-building activities, including training of relevant officers, disseminating information about refugee instruments and principles and providing financial, technical and advisory services to accelerate the enactment or amendment and implementation of legislation relating to refugees;

12. *Appeals* to Governments, the United Nations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the international community to create conditions to facilitate the voluntary return in safety and with dignity and the early rehabilitation and reintegration of refugees;

13. *Appeals* to the international community to respond positively, in the spirit of solidarity and burden-sharing, to the third-country resettlement requests of African refugees;

14. *Commends* the Governments of the Great Lakes and West African regions and of the Horn of Africa and the Office of the High Commissioner for their initiatives to promote voluntary repatriation in safety and with dignity within the framework of tripartite agreements;

15. *Calls upon* the Office of the High Commissioner, the Organization of African Unity, subregional organizations and all African States to continue to work closely in identifying solutions to all outstanding refugee problems;

16. *Encourages* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to continue to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, within their respective mandates, in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in emergency humanitarian situations in Africa;

17. *Welcomes* the ongoing efforts undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees with host Governments, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and the international community in concentrating on the environment and ecosystems of countries of asylum;

18. *Notes with satisfaction* the voluntary return of millions of refugees to their homelands following the successful repatriation and reintegration operations carried out by the Office of the High Commissioner, with the cooperation and collaboration of countries hosting refugees and countries of origin, and looks forward to other programmes to assist the voluntary repatriation of all refugees in Africa;

19. *Expresses its concern* about the long stay of refugees in certain African countries, and calls upon the Office of the High Commissioner to keep its programmes under review, in conformity with its mandate in the host countries, taking into account the increasing requirements there;

20. *Urges* the international community to continue to fund the general refugee programmes of the Office of the High Commissioner, taking into account the substantially increased needs of programmes in Africa;

21. *Calls upon* Governments, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the international community as a whole to strengthen the emergency response capacity of the United Nations system and, in the context of burden-sharing, to continue to provide needed resources and operational support to refugees and countries of asylum in Africa until a durable solution can be found;

22. *Calls upon* the international donor community to provide material and financial assistance for the implementation of programmes intended for the rehabilitation of the environment and infrastructure affected by refugees in countries of asylum;

23. *Requests* all Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to pay particular attention to meeting the special needs of refugee women and children and displaced persons, including those with special protection needs;

24. *Calls upon* the Office of the High Commissioner to make renewed efforts to ensure that the rights, needs and dignity of elderly refugees are fully respected and addressed through appropriate programme activities;

25. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General, the Office of the High Commissioner and intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations, in conjunction with States, to increase the capacity for coordination and delivery of humanitarian emergency assistance and disaster relief in respect of asylum, repatriation, rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees, returnees and displaced persons, including refugees in urban areas;

26. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, taking fully into account the efforts expended by countries of asylum, under the item entitled "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions", and to present an oral report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1999.

85th plenary meeting
9 December 1998